

THE GULL



GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOL. 87 NO. 9 NOVEMBER 2002

FOUNDED 1917

GGAS Partners with Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center

by Marjorie Blackwell

CALIFORNIA
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With a flourish of pens, hearty handshakes and smiles, GGAS President Miles McKey and Douglas Siden, President of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center, signed a memorandum of agreement between the two organizations on September 30, 2002. The agreement combines the goals and efforts of both organizations to strengthen the environmental educational program at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park in Oakland.

"This agreement formalizes a synergy between our two organizations, as well as with the East Bay Regional Park District," McKey said. "The Freedom Center and the Park District want to establish a center in the shoreline park that offers the surrounding community, especially young people, an opportunity to learn about the life and ideas of Martin Luther King, Jr. and also about their natural environment in the unique setting of a restored marshland." GGAS already provides environmental education programs to East Oakland schoolchildren in elementary school classrooms and in field trips to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline Park.

"A primary intent of this agreement," McKey said, "is to enable both our organizations to obtain grant funds to continue and expand our highly successful and effective environmental education program. We hope and expect that this agreement will be the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship."

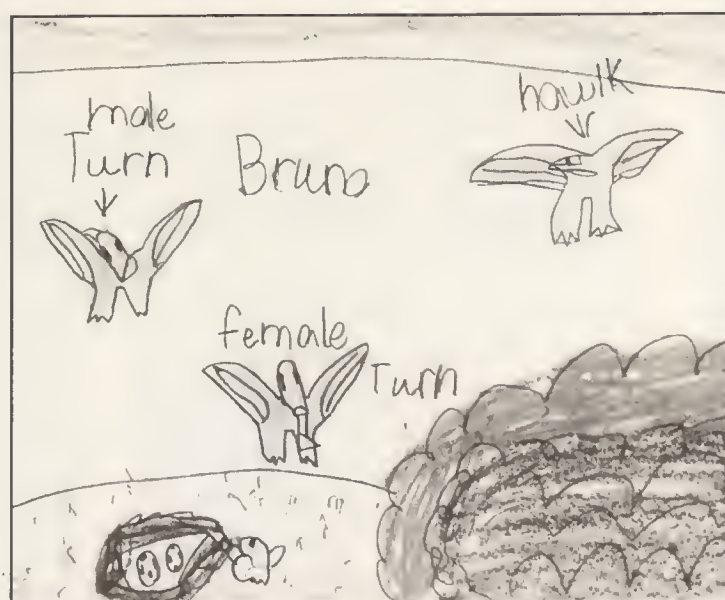
The Freedom Center was created in 1994 when state legislation, authored by then-Assemblywoman Barbara Lee, authorized an agreement between the city of Oakland and the East Bay Regional Park District to establish a center at the MLK Regional Shoreline Park. The agreement included the Port of Oakland, which owns the land, the California State Coastal Conservancy, which provided grant funding for planning and development, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. March and Rally Committee.

The East Bay Regional Park District plans to build the center at the former Beach Café, on the edge of San Leandro Bay, off Doolittle Drive. The center will offer a number of activities, especially for youth in the surrounding area. Plans include a reading resource room, a store, a student-run café, and an open-air pavilion and amphitheater for classes, cultural events, theater and musical performances.

In addition to GGAS-run environmental education programs, other activities will include conflict resolution and

non-violence training for at-risk youth, according to Freedom Center Director Claire Greensfelder.

The Freedom Center has already begun holding events in the park, such as the recent Bay Area Youth Peacemakers Celebration, which drew more than 200 Oakland, Berkeley and Richmond teens. 🐦



Drawing by a child in the GGAS education program in the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wetlands Education Project taught by GGAS staff.



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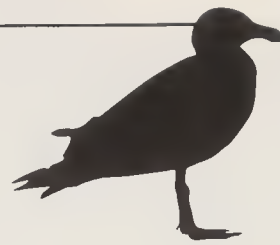
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FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Elkhorn Slough, Moss Landing

Saturday, November 2

Meet at Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve's Visitor Center at 8:30 a.m. Fall is an excellent time of the year to visit the Reserve. Our primary focus will be on the returning shorebirds and waterfowl. Leader: Rick Fournier 831.632.2473; www.montereybirdingadventures.com.

Strybing Arboretum, San Francisco

Sundays, November 3, December 1

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Sunday of the month half-day trip. Strybing Arboretum is a delightful section of Golden Gate Park, with several "micro-habitats" attracting a varied array of resident, migrant and vagrant birds. Beginners and all others welcome. GGAS co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons 415. 566.3241.

Coyote Hills Regional Park Friday, November 8

Meet at 8 a.m. in the first parking lot on the left (beyond the fee booth). This is a unique park with fresh water and salt pond habitat. We should see ducks, waders and much more. From the East Bay take I-880 south to Rt. 84/Dumbarton Bridge exit. Turn right and continue west. Exit on Paseo Padre Pkwy. Turn right and continue north one mile, left on Patterson Ranch Rd. to Coyote Hills. Bring lunch

and liquids. Beginners welcome. Leader: Bob Lewis 510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com.

Arrowhead Marsh, Alameda County

Saturday, November 9

Meet at 9:30 a.m. for a 3-hour stroll. We should see lots of shorebirds, perhaps Clapper Rail and Burrowing Owl. Take I-880 south to Hegenberger and then west on Hegenberger to Doolittle Drive. Right on Doolittle, right onto Swan Way. Left into the park. Drive to end for Arrowhead Marsh parking lot. Bring scope if you have one. All levels of birders welcome. Leader: Courtenay Peddle 510.532.8911 (please don't call after 9 p.m.); capeddle@there.net.

Palo Alto Baylands

Sunday, November 10

Meet at 8 a.m. We should see waterfowl, rails and shorebirds. Take Hwy. 101 south to Palo Alto. Exit at Embarcadero; drive east toward the airport and the Baylands Nature Center. Continue beyond the airport to the duck pond (on the left); park at the east end. Bring lunch, scope and appropriate clothes. The trip ends about mid-afternoon. Beginners welcome. [*] Leader: Jay Withgott withgott@pacbell.net.

Las Gallinas Sewer Ponds, Marin County

Sunday, November 17

Meet at 8 a.m. at the parking lot. We will see wintering ducks and shorebirds, keeping in mind that anything can show up! Take Hwy. 101 north and

exit at the Lucas Valley Drive/Smith Ranch Rd. off ramp. Go east on Smith Ranch Rd. to the end. Take a sharp left to the sewage treatment ponds, just before the county park. Drive past the headquarters to the parking lot on the left. Trip ends at noon. Beginners welcome. Leader: Mark Eaton 415.566.6767 mweaton@pacbell.net.

Biking and Birding the East Bay

Sunday, November 17

Meet at 9:30 a.m. For details on this month's trip, call leader Jeffrey Black 510.526.7068.

Aquatic Park, San Francisco

Sundays, November 17, December 8

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier (Hyde & Jefferson) for this beginners bird walk. Discover birds next door to the urban environment. San Francisco Maritime National Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two-hour walk. Dress in layers. Trip is wheelchair accessible. 415.561.7100 or 561.7104.

Redwood Regional Park, Oakland

Sunday, December 1

We will be seeking resident and wintering landbirds in riparian, redwood and coastal scrub habitats. Meet at 8 a.m. in the last parking lot. Take Highway 13 to Redwood Rd. exit. Go east (toward the hills) on Redwood Rd. for 3 miles to park entrance on left. Leader: Rusty Scalf 510.666.9936; rscalf@jps.net.

Trips marked with [\$] go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee. Carpooling arrangements will be attempted by leader for trips marked with a [].*

Monterey Bay & Coastal Areas

Saturday, December 7

We will be looking for loons, grebes, gulls, alcids and rocky coastline species. Meet at 9 a.m. in Monterey at the foot of the Coast Guard Pier at the southeast end of Cannery Row. Bring quarters for parking. We will bird this area then drive north, stopping at various spots including Moss Landing. Beginners welcome. Bring lunch and a scope if you have one. Leader: Don Starks 408.266.2969 (evenings) [*].



Black Crowned Night Heron, Lake Merritt

Arrowhead Marsh, Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline

Sunday, December 8

Meet at 9:30 a.m. for this 3-hour trip. Take I-880 to Hegenberger Rd. exit. Drive west about a half mile. Just past Leet Drive, turn right into a small parking lot just after you cross over the estuary. Leader: Jeffrey Black 510.525.7068.

Gray Lodge & Sacramento Wildlife Refuges

Saturday and Sunday,

December 14 & 15

We will be looking for wintering geese

(four species), Tundra Swans, a variety of ducks, raptors and Sandhill Cranes. For this 2-day trip, meet Saturday at 9 a.m. in lot #14 at Gray Lodge. Drive east on I-80 15 miles beyond Davis to Route 99 exit. Go north 52 miles on Route 99 to the town of Gridley. Turn left [west] on Colusa Hwy and continue 5 miles to Pennington Rd. Turn left; follow signs to Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge. Proceed through the checking station [\$] and to parking lot #14. We will caravan through Gray Lodge Wildlife Refuge Saturday, then visit some other sites in Sutter County and Butte County so make sure you have plenty of gasoline before arriving at Gray Lodge.

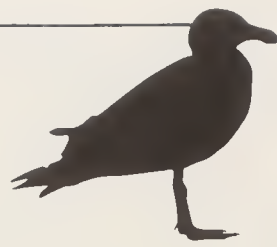
On Sunday, we will meet at 9 a.m. in the visitors' parking lot at the Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge [\$]. From I-5 take the Princeton exit (the sign used to say Norman Road but now says something like Road 68) just north of the Glenn Co. line, and follow signs to the Refuge. Allow 2.5 hours driving time from the Bay Area.

For accommodations, try the Blue Gum Willows Motel or the Best Western in Willows. There is no lodge in Gray Lodge. Bring lunch, snacks, liquids, scopes and clothes appropriate for the Sacramento Valley in December (cold, with wind and rain always possible). Heavy rain cancels trip. Join us for either day or both. Leaders: Steve and Renee Margolin 530.342.6476 [\$].

If you need a ride or can take a passenger (even if a trip is not marked with an [*]), if you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair at 510.654.5954.

PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



The November membership programs promise to be interesting and entertaining. For more information about events or directions to program locations, visit www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs.htm.

San Francisco

The San Francisco meetings are held at the County Fair building at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way, San Francisco. Parking is available on the street or in the parking lot behind the building off Lincoln at 10th Ave. We meet socially at 7 p.m. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, November 8

Alan Hopkins: "San Francisco Cosmopolitan Ecosystems"

San Francisco's parks are counted among the world's great urban parks. While Golden Gate Park was created atop blowing sand dunes, some of our other City parks contain remnants of pre-Colombian habitat. Our parks provide an opportunity for urban naturalists to study the complex relationships between native and non-native species. What happens when birds that nest in Canada, and spend winters in California, feed in trees from Australia? How has a European bird, released in Central Park in New York in 1890, affected the native birds in Golden Gate Park? How can we protect and enhance biodiversity in the parks? And why should we care?

Join Alan Hopkins as he explores these and other aspects of the cosmopolitan ecology of our parks. Alan has studied birds and other wildlife in San Francisco for more than 25 years. His photographs have been published in several nature journals including the Presidio Post, Birding, and American Birds. He is the founder of the Save The Quail Campaign and was Golden Gate Audubon Society chapter president from 1998 to 2000.


Berkeley

The Berkeley meetings are held at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley, (between Solano and Marin). We meet socially at 7 p.m. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday, November 21

Joelle Buffa: "Seabirds and Seasons of the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge."

Managing the largest seabird-nesting island south of Alaska isn't only about birds. The small research field facility on South Farallon Island is powered by an award-winning solar collection system, and housed in buildings that are on the National List of Historic Places. Researchers "harvest" their own drinking water and, recently, artists have created a "habitat sculpture" on the island that hosts nesting Cassin's auklets and Pigeon Guillemonts. Joelle Buffa will bring us up-to-date about how breeding murres, puffins, and cormorants have fared these last few years and explain how humans fit into this island ecosystem.

Joelle currently heads the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex's Biology Program, and is the Manager of the Farallon National Wildlife Refuge. She has a degree in Wildlife Biology, and has worked as a Wildlife Biologist for 4 government agencies during her 25-year career. 



Brewer's Blackbird at NAS Alameda

Sibley Comes to San Francisco

Meet David Allen Sibley, author of *The Sibley Guide to Birds*, the field guide that wowed the birding community last year, as he introduces his new book *Sibley's Birding Basics*. The Golden Gate Audubon Society is pleased to co-sponsor this lunch-time book signing event at Stacey's Bookstore, Monday, November 4th at 12:30 p.m.

The quintessential activity of birding identification is the subject of this compact and easy-to-use book by America's premier living painter of birds, author and illustrator David Allen Sibley. Sibley details everything a birder needs to know to identify species: when and where to look, the basics of identification, and how to interpret characteristics, all illustrated with full-color paintings created specifically for this volume.

Stacey's Bookstore

581 Market Street

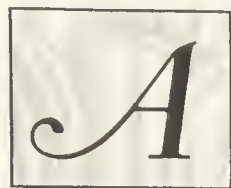
(very close to the Montgomery Street BART/MUNI Station). For information, call Stacey's at 415.421.4687 or 800.926.6511 or visit www.staceys.com.

Wish List

The GGAS Board of Directors is undertaking a periodic review of GGAS insurance coverage, and would like help from a **volunteer with expertise in insurance or risk management**. The GGAS coverage is straightforward, and its broker is helpful, so the time required would be limited.

Save the Quail Update

by Alan Hopkins



As the summer of 2002 changes to fall, the Save the Quail Campaign is pleased to report San Francisco's quail appear to be responding to our efforts.

Gloomy spring and early summer reports from our quail watchers in Strybing Arboretum gave little hope that the covey would survive. During the peak of breeding season Joyce Lehmann emailed "I can't remember when I last sent a report, perhaps May 14th. I haven't sent any since then because I haven't seen any quail. I went on May 21st, May 28th, May 29th, and June 5th, on all those days in the afternoon. No quail heard or seen. I looked in wide areas. On one of the days Terry the gardener said he had seen two males near the greenhouse. Yipes, where are they?" Other reports reflected Joyce's concern. Especially troubling was the fact that the lone female had not been seen in some time. On June 30, when about all hope was gone, Rich Ferrick wrote "Don't know if this is old news but there are eight quail chicks in the Arboretum being tended to by two males and a female." This was great news indeed! As the summer progressed six of the eight chicks survived, of which two chicks turned out to be females, greatly increasing the chances for next year's breeding success.

In the Presidio, the efforts at quail habitat restoration are clearly working. After all the ice plant was removed from Quail Commons, and volunteers

planted 4,500 native plants on the newly exposed dunes, the Presidio's quail considered the Commons their new home. The quail also benefited from the Commons' specially designed brush piles. The piles were strategically placed to give the quail nearby cover while foraging on nutritious forbs sprouting in the dunes. As spring turned to summer, Lupine seeds long-covered by ice plant sprang to life, creating a dense scrub habitat ideal for the quail to hide and nest in. As expected, most of the quail left the site to breed elsewhere. However, where once there was only ice plant, two pairs remained to breed. Other birds moved into the new habitat as well: White-crowned Sparrows nested, goldfinches ate the Fiddlenecks seed, hummingbirds nectared on the Monkeyflower and Indian Paintbrush, and Black Phoebes, Hooded Orioles and swallows found insects to feed on. Among the insects were Acmon Blue, Gray Hairstreak and Field Crescent butterflies. Damien Raffa, Presidio Trust Natural Resources Specialist, stated "The results are clear: our Presidio covey can be seen on almost any visit to the areas we're restoring. The path ahead: continued enhancement both to maintain the habitat values of fledgling and 'old growth' dune scrub as well as improvements to the surrounding urban jungle."


Our efforts to save the quail gained a great ally when biologist Tom Gardali of the Point Reyes Bird Observatory (PRBO) decided the project to save urban quail was worth PRBO's time and money. A team from PRBO will be color-banding some of the Presidio's quail to give us a picture of the quails' range, ages, which pairs are mating, and offspring survivability. This data will be collected by volunteers who



Siobhan Ruck

Quail

participate in quail counts and informal censuses. As sightings occur they will be posted on a quail Web site.

As in previous years, we had a number of interesting quail sightings. There were three reports of a quail at Grattan Playground in the Haight. Hugh Cotter, and weeks later Nathan Dias, reported a pair of quail from Lands End. Josiah Clark saw quail in his yard on Lake Street. Roy Liggitt and Courtney Clarkson reported a friend had a family of quail in a Cow Hollow back yard. With color-banded quail and a team of watchers, some of the mysteries regarding our quails' comings and goings will be resolved. If you would like to help with the quail count or restoration parties contact Alan Hopkins at 415. 664.0983 email ash@sfo.com. 

Upcoming Save the Quail Volunteer Dates

October 26

Quail habitat restoration

November 9

Quail count

November 16

Quail habitat restoration

December 27

San Francisco Christmas bird count

An Environmentally Disastrous Presidency

by Arthur Feinstein



Some of you may have been wondering why you haven't seen any articles in *The Gull* responding to President Bush's disastrous environmental policies. One reason is that there have been so very many bad ones it's been impossible to choose the worst.

From arsenic (delaying implementation of new, more restrictive guidelines) to forests (opening up more forests to intensive logging under the guise of fire control) to water diversions (allowing farmers to take more California water at the expense of our Bay and threatening the future of endangered salmon and many other fish and wildlife species) this administration is proving to be the most environmentally disastrous since President Reagan and, if you remember him, Secretary James Watt.

As you can see there are just too many issues to choose from. So what can you do? Writing the President may not achieve very much, but writing your Representative and your Senators to remind them that the environment is a key issue to their constituency is very important. It is up to our Representatives and Senators to put the brakes on this administration to the greatest degree they can. So please write your Representative and both Senators Boxer and Feinstein and ask them to defend our environmental laws in the face of this onslaught. Thanks.

Their addresses are:

For your Representative:

The Honorable (full name)
US House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

For your Senators:

The Honorable Barbara Boxer or
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

If you want to do more to help our natural world by writing letters on specific issues, there is an easy way to take action:

Golden Gate Audubon has an Armchair Activist program. In this program we send you a monthly letter on a specific conservation issue. We give you background information, talking points, a sample letter, addresses and phone numbers. It's easy, takes only an hour or less a month, and you know that you have done your bit to help preserve our natural world. Join our growing Armchair Activist network. If you give us your email address we hope to send these out by email in the near future.

Late-Breaking News

It has recently been announced that President Bush is seeking to revise the most basic, and important, of our environmental laws, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), that was signed into law by President Nixon in 1970.

NEPA is the national law that requires federal agencies to analyze the environmental impacts of any project

requiring federal funding or federal agency action. If someone wants to destroy a wetland they must first get a federal permit from the Army Corps of Engineers and thus must first analyze the environmental impacts of the project. It's the same for logging in national forests or any other action requiring a federal permit. This is the only way regulators can determine what impacts will result from these projects.

Absent NEPA it's a green light for federal agencies to approve all environmentally damaging projects because they will not be required to determine whether there are any such impacts and thus have no reason not to approve the projects. What you don't know won't hurt you, but it may well destroy the natural world.


The Bush administration is saying they just want to make the NEPA process work faster by "streamlining" it. But it is not really possible to speed up analysis of incredibly complex ecological relationships. It takes time to study an ecosystem and determine how changes are going to alter it and how badly. Speeding up the process is the same as rubber-stamping development and resource exploitation.

This is the most aggressive attack on our environmental laws since they were established in the 1970s. Please write or call President Bush and tell him to leave NEPA alone and to withdraw his plans to "streamline" NEPA.

You should also include this in your messages to your Representative and your Senators.

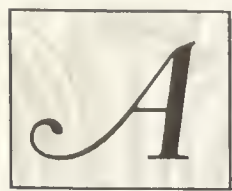
You can call in comments to the President at 202.456.1111 or write to:

President George W. Bush

The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500 

Eighty-Three Years of Conservation Leadership

by Arthur Feinstein



As a Golden Gate Audubon Society member, you should rightly share with us our great pride in the many accomplishments this nonprofit, almost entirely volunteer organization has achieved over our 83 years of existence.

In 1968, in conjunction with several other Audubon Chapters, we helped save Bolinas Lagoon from development and created the unique and wonderful egret and heron sanctuary, Audubon Canyon Ranch. In our files is a deed title recognizing GGAS as owner of the farm that ultimately became ACR. That ownership lasted a very short time, just long enough for us to create the Audubon Canyon Ranch.

In 1978 when Emeryville Crescent's tidal marshes were threatened, GGAS stepped forward and saved the marsh. In 1986, when the Port of Oakland threatened to destroy 300 acres of seasonal wetlands on the Oakland Airport property, GGAS initiated 10 years of litigation resulting in the preservation of those wetlands and restoration of 72 acres of wetlands at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline Park.

In 1994, when the closing of the Alameda Naval Air Station threatened the endangered California Least Tern's most important nesting colonies, GGAS not only preserved the colony but convinced the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create an Alameda National Wildlife Refuge to protect the Tern, the endangered Brown Pelican and over 100 other bird species.

Pier 98 was once going to be the San Francisco base of a new Bay Bridge. When, in the mid-1990s, regulators realized that bridge was not going to be built and began the process of having this stub of dirt removed, only GGAS knew that abandoned area had become a rich tidal marsh that was sustaining the only breeding colony of Avocets in San Francisco and providing important roosting habitat for hundreds of shorebirds. Thanks to our efforts Pier 98 is now Heron's Head Park.

GGAS continues to be a conservation leader in the Central Bay today. We have started an innovative environmental education partnership with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Freedom Center, recognizing that as our state population diversifies so must we as an organization. We also have strong environmental education programs in Alameda and San Francisco.

We are working tirelessly to ensure that the Eastshore State Park, stretching along the East Bay shoreline from Emeryville to Richmond, preserves and enhances wildlife habitat. In the East Bay hills we are fighting to preserve Gateway Valley, recognized as an Aquatic Site of National Importance.

When the creation of a wetland at Crissy Field in the Presidio was considered a lost cause you, our members, came out in the hundreds to convince the Golden Gate National Recreation Area to go ahead with the marsh creation. The wetland is now the centerpiece of the Presidio.

In San Francisco we are bringing


back the California Quail. Once numbering in the many thousands, there are now less than 100 in the City. We've developed a restoration plan for the Quail and are starting to implement it in the Presidio with the wonderful assistance of the Presidio Trust. In years to come, San Franciscans will once again hear the cry of the Quail and see coveys scurrying across the path as they walk through city parks.

And there's lots more that we have done and are doing. We are working to restore wetlands in San Francisco and supporting the effort to restore wetlands on Treasure Island. We're helping communities in Oakland preserve their streams and watersheds.

We are proud of our 83 years of conservation leadership, and we are proud of you, our members, who have made this success story possible. As we look to the future it is clear that GGAS needs to remain strong and vigilant. One of the most significant actions we can take to keep GGAS strong is to consider how a bequest in our wills to GGAS can change the future of our world for the better.

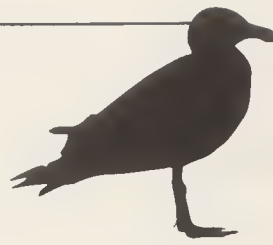
Most of us have no idea how to make a bequest, so below is suggested language for such bequests:

"I hereby give and bequeath to the Golden Gate Audubon Society, Inc., in Berkeley, California, the amount of _____ (write in dollar amount of gift or percent of estate) to be used exclusively to fund the Golden Gate Audubon Society's conservation and education efforts. Golden Gate Audubon Tax ID # 94-6086896."

Thank you for being a member of Golden Gate Audubon. We hope this interests those of you who are contemplating the future and who hope to give our natural world a little bit of help. 

BACKYARD BIRDER

Meg Pauletich



Evolutionary law determines what is essential. No frivolous feature or unnecessary task is perpetuated in a bird's life." So begins Maryjo Koch's beautiful book, "Bird, Egg, Feather, Nest." (By the way, this book would delight any birder if you need a gift idea. It has all sorts of fascinating facts along with beautiful illustrations.) The mere fact that birds have been evolving since prehistoric times and are still among us gives credence to this statement. They must adapt or their lives are at stake.

Much of our observances are at the bird feeders we keep filled. There, competition for food appears to depend on sheer size and dominance of one species over another. In nature, it's slightly different.

When two or more individuals require the same limited resource, competition occurs. This resource could be food, water, habitat, nest sites or mates. Competition could be between two species or between two individuals of the same species. What could be a big fight rarely comes to that because fighting is a waste of energy and time. It is harder to notice competition between birds of the same species because it is so subtle. The results could be merely a smaller production of young in the less-adapted or less-aggressive individuals.

"Niche" applies to all the resources needed by a species to exist. Two species with identical niches cannot co-exist in the same place. In the beginning, both species will negatively affect

each other as they compete for the same resources. Eventually one will become better adapted and displace the other. Instead of extinction, this leads to variation among individuals of the declining species. Bill sizes, for example, allow some to feed on different food items. When two species utilize different resources rather than compete for the



Lawrence's Goldfinch

Siobhan Ruck


same ones, it is called resource partitioning. Think of it as ecological sharing. Although it begins as competition, it ultimately leads to reduced competition between the involved species.

Some prime examples of resource partitioning occur in the ways that diving birds fish. Cormorants dive deep and feed on bottom-dwelling fish while the Black Skimmer scoops up fish and aquatic invertebrates on the water's surface. The finch family sports all sorts of specialized bills. The large bills of cardinals, the medium-sized bills of sparrows and the tiny bills of siskins allow them to share seeds according to size. Sandpipers have different

lengths of bills which allow them to probe mud flats to different depths.

A Princeton ecologist, Robert MacArthur, chose to study populations of five warbler species who sometimes breed together in northeastern coniferous forests. All five species often feed in the same tree. Talk about sharing! It turns out that the warblers preferred slightly different types of food and also moved differently, some sluggish, some active, while foraging. In addition, they needed greater amounts of food at different times because they nested at varying times. Ultimately, it was found that each species had a preferred feeding zone which reduced competition.

Cape May and Blackburnian Warblers preferred the tops of trees. And while the Cape Mays kept more to the edges, moving vertically and making short hawking flights to snag flying insects, the Blackburnians moved horizontally in the entire top, including the center. Black-throated Green and Bay-breasted Warblers spent most of their foraging time in the middle sections of the canopies. The Black-throated Greens preferred the dense outer portions, including new buds, and often hovered to extract insects. The Bay-breasteds favored the shaded interior portions. Yellow-rumped Warblers used the most varied foraging habits but had their highest activity in the bottom areas of the tree.

All of this kind of information is very interesting, but for us eagle-eyed birders it is valuable for identification purposes as well. Knowing a specific bird's feeding habits, where it prefers to nest and where it prefers to live can make you appear to be an expert in the eyes of a novice bird watcher. And it's the reason I suggest securing a local guide when birding in a new territory. Even we birders have our own niches! 

Christmas Bird Counts

Oakland: Sunday, December 15

San Francisco: Friday, December 27

Do you like getting out into the field to watch birds? Do you enjoy meeting other birders of various skill levels and learning about new areas to bird? Do you enjoy observing the birds visiting your backyard feeders? Do you enjoy eating a hot and hearty meal after a day in the field? Do you like to gather information on birds that will help protect habitat in our communities? If you answer yes to any of these questions, please join us for one or both of this year's Christmas Bird Counts!

Golden Gate Audubon Society (GGAS) will hold two Christmas Bird Counts (CBC), one in San Francisco and one in Oakland. Anyone can participate regardless of birding skills. Notices, with sign-up details, will be mailed in early November to all who have participated in the past five years. Anyone else wanting to participate should contact the GGAS office (510.843.2222; ggas@goldengateaudubon.org).

What are the Christmas Bird Counts?

On a CBC, birders record as many species and individuals as possible in one day in a circle that covers a 15-mile diameter. The San Francisco CBC attempts to count all the birds from San Bruno to the Golden Gate. The Oakland CBC covers the area from Pt. Isabel to the Oakland Airport and from Treasure Island to Lafayette. We break into teams led by local experts to search fields, shorelines, suburbs, reservoirs and mountain trails for wintering birds. Others stay at home and count the birds coming to their bird feeder. After a day of birding, everyone gets together at the informal count dinner (good, wholesome and reasonably priced!). At the dinner, we tally the total species seen and each group shares stories of their bird sightings and adventures. Who has the funniest CBC experience, who has the "best" bird or a new bird for their area, or who had the tastiest noon-time treats? Some groups of participants have been covering the same area for so many years it is as much a social event as a bird count. New participants enjoy meeting other birders and learning good locations to bird. Although we have fun, there is a serious side too. All the information we collect is submitted to the National Audubon Society, and made available to researchers studying bird distribution and population trends. Some information is used by land managers and environmental activists to protect our local wildlife. We look forward to you joining our Christmas Bird Counts!

Alan Hopkins, Compiler for the San Francisco CBC

Joelle Buffa and Clyde Morris, Co-Compilers for the Oakland CBC

Donations

Thanks to all of you who joined us as new GGAS \$20 Supporting Members and added a donation to support our many conservation, education and membership activities.

Least Tern (\$200 to \$500)

Jean Conner

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$200)

George M. Foster, Jr. (Gateway), Patricia Greene, William McCoy (Gateway), Jill Moak (Gateway), and Marilyn Nasatir

Gifts (to \$100)

Ellen W. Barth, Susanna Bensinger (Gateway), George F. Bing, Cecil W. Blank, Vi Louise Bruene, Kevin and Susan Consey, Richard S. Cooper, Roger Corbett, Rudolf Glauser (Gateway), Helen A. Green, David and Sharon Gumz, Ellis and Ellen Harris, Albert Hoffman/David Shepherd, Rich and Terry Horrigan, Willard Huyck, Robert and Patricia Jacobs, Anne Jennings, Barbara Job (Gateway), Patricia and Gerald Johnson, Ms. Nancy Kenyon, David Kessler and Nancy Mennel, Caroline Kim, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar Lehmann, Robert A. and Hannelore Lewis, Sylvia C. McLaughlin, Mikiye Nakanishi, Eileen C. Odegaard, Regina Phelps and Jim Hill, Robert Prestegaard, Dee S. Pruy, George Raiche, Lynn Reese, Iris Richards, Mrs. Robert J. Riddell, Mary Schaefer, Verena Schumacher, Judy Signorelli (Gateway), John V. Sudall, Ruth Sutter, Donald C. Williams (Gateway), Diane E. Wilson, and Russ Wilson (Gateway)

In Memoriam

In memory of my husband, Lucien Le Cam
— Louise Le Cam

Binoculars for Latin America Committee

Ruth Vose and Arthur Feinstein

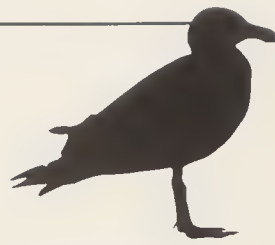
Foundation Grant

East Bay Community Foundation, \$15,000 grant for MLK Jr. Wetlands Education Project

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest, we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS office for more information. Our phone number is 510.843.2222. Thanks.

OBSERVATIONS

September 1–30, 2002
Jay Withgott



Each year, coastal California birders eagerly look forward to September, and sure enough, the month produced an exciting batch of migrant passerines and surprising vagrants this time around. The favorite hotspot, Outer Point Reyes, experienced a minor fallout of mostly western migrants on 19-20 Sept., and a substantial fallout of eastern vagrants on 26-27 Sept. The 27th brought to Pt. Reyes a gorgeous Golden-winged Warbler that thrilled many dozens, and probably hundreds, of observers. And it also brought to the Farallon Islands a bird from Asia — a Little Bunting, the first record for northern California. Besides rarities, the season was punctuated for many birders by big days and special events like San Francisco's Rare Bird Roundup and the birdathons run by PRBO and SFBBO.

Loons to Ducks

Two Laysan Albatrosses were seen on a 29 Sept. SJPT at Cordell Bank, MRN. A Cook's Petrel was spotted from the deck of a barge stationed over the wreck of the Jacob Luckenbach, (ASH); bird and mammal surveys are being done from the barge while crews work to recover the oil that has seeped from the sunken ship. A **Streaked Shearwater** (*Calonectris leucomelas*) was viewed by 2 Cordell Bank, MRN, pelagic trips on 29 Sept. The first record for MRN, this is the third sighting off the California coast this season (SH; mob). Shearwater highlights for the month included 2 Flesh-footed on a 29 Sept. Cordell Bank PT (RS) and 1 on a 13 Sept. SJPT there; 1 Short-tailed on the 13 Sept. SJPT; and Black-vented from a 29 Sept. Cordell trip (RS) and from Pigeon Pt., 29-30

Sept. (RSTh, JM, DS, JWi). Storm-Petrels were in good numbers early in the month, with a 2 Sept. Cordell Bank PT recording 6 species, including 3000-4000 Ashy, 300 Fork-tailed, 30 Wilson's, 20 Black, 2 Leach's, and 1 Least (RS). A single Ashy Storm-Petrel seemed to have become a Giants fan, putting in appearances during games at PacBell Park, SF, on the nights of the 5th and 6th (DQ; GD). This is not the first such occurrence; one wonders how the lights of our coastal cities influence flight paths of nocturnally foraging seabirds and nighttime migrant passerines.

A Booby species, probably a **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*), was reported off Tomales Point, PRNS, MRN, 26 Sept. (SA fide JC). On the 19th, a Frigatebird species was spotted off San Francisco. Initially seen from a plane during an aerial survey of marine birds and mammals by the state Dept. of Fish and Game (Jeff Davis), the bird was also glimpsed from shore that day (ASH). The month's two best Ciconiiformes, Least Bittern and Little Blue Heron, came just outside our 9-county region, in Lake Co., on the 4th and 14th respectively (JW).

Another Lake Co. surprise was an **Emperor Goose** (*Chen canagica*), rare enough in winter, let alone in September. The bird was seen at Rodman Slough on 29 Sept. (DH, JK; JW, oob). The male Harlequin Duck discovered Aug. 27 at CPCP, SM, continued through month's end (mob).

Raptors to Alcids

Hawkwatchers at Hawk Hill, MRN, had some good flight days this month, peaking with nearly 1000 birds on 22 Sept., and tallying over 85 Broad-winged Hawks during the month (numbers are

preliminary; GGRO). Away from Hawk Hill, 13 Broad-wings were reported from sites in CC, MRN, SF, and SM. Single-digits of Ferruginous Hawk, Swainson's Hawk, and Prairie Falcon were seen at Hawk Hill and at sites elsewhere. A migrant Bald Eagle flew over Twin Peaks, SF, on the 26th (HB).

Most exciting, however, was a new chapter in California's **Crested Caracara** (*Caracara plancus*) saga. One of these charismatic Mexican raptors was found near Davenport, SCZ, on 21 Sept. (MC) and viewed by many through at least the 27th. This follows several coastal California sightings this year, most recently in Monterey Co. in Aug. Discussions are ongoing as to whether any of these birds represent the same individual, and on whether they are wild vagrants or captive escapees. For discussion, photos, and links, see: <http://montereybay.com/creagrus/MTYcaracara.html>, and <http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmorlan/crcal.htm>.

Pacific Golden-Plovers were reported from PRNS, 9 Sept. (2 birds; RS); from near Pigeon Pt, SM, 12 Sept. (LC); and from Alviso, SCL (2 birds, 1-22 and 10-22 Sept.; MR, JWi, mob). Solitary Sandpipers appeared at Limantour, PRNS, MRN, 10 Sept. (JE) and Shollenberger Park, SON, 12 Sept. (DAs). A possible **Wood Sandpiper** (*Tringa glareola*) was reported from L. Earl, DN, on 12 Sept. but was never relocated (AB, JG, SM). Also reported up north was a **Red-necked Stint** (*Calidris ruficollis*) from near Arcata, HUM, 4 Sept. (KI). Baird's Sandpipers numbered 12 and Pectoral Sandpipers numbered 22+, from MRN, SCL, and SM. At Alviso, SCL, a second Stilt Sandpiper was added on 10 Sept. to the bird continuing from Aug. (JWi; oob); the last report for either was the 18th. A juv. Buff-breasted Sandpiper pleased many observers at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, 4-14 Sept. (CC, SH). And Ruffs were seen at Alviso, SCL (cont. through the month from Aug.) and near the I Ranch at PRNS, MRN, 12-14 Sept. (RS).

South Polar Skuas topped out at 12 on the 29 Sept. SJPT to Cordell Bank, MRN, and jaegers of all 3 species were numerous, with 75 Long-tailed on a 2 Sept. Cordell PT (RS), and Parasitics seen from shore at many sites. Over 3500 Sabine's Gulls on the Cordell SJPT on the 29th was an astounding total. And Arctic Terns weren't far behind, with 630 seen that day (DSH). One Arctic Tern showed up inland at Redwood Shores, SM, on 5 Sept. (RSTh). Common Terns numbered 10 at sites in SCL, SF, and SM, and an additional 26 passed by Pigeon Pt, SM, on 28 Sept. (RSTh). A Thick-billed Murre (*Uria lomvia*) was reported from a PT out of Crescent City, DN, 14 Sept. (JHu). The 29 Sept. Cordell SJPT had 7 Xantus's Murrelets and 5 Tufted Puffins.

Doves to Thrashers

A White-winged Dove arrived on the Farallon Is., SF, 31 Aug. (PP). Single Long-eared Owls were found at the Farallons (PP), and at Lincoln Park, SF, 14 Sept. (HC, ASH; oob) for the first city record in 2 decades.

At Fitzgerald MR, Moss Beach, SM, a Chimney Swift was studied flying with Vaux's Swifts, 27 Sept. (RSTh). A Ruby-throated Hummingbird (*Archilochus colubris*) from the East visited a feeder near Arcata, HUM, 27-29 Sept. (KH, JT; oob). Unusual hummingbirds in our area were Black-chinned at Fitzgerald MR, SM, 14 Sept. (PG, oob) and at OPR, MRN, 19 Sept. (RS); Costa's at East Wash, SF, 9 Sept. (KM); and Calliope at Mt. Davidson, SF, 19 Sept. (PS). The Calliope was SF's 3rd city record, all of which have come this year.

In the *Empidonax* department, the Farallons had 3 Least Flycatchers (PP). A 4th was at OPR, MRN, 9 Sept. (RS), and another turned up at Mt. Davidson, SF, 2 days later (KM, PS), while Hammond's Flycatchers numbered 3 in SF (ND, HC, JM, RF). A Gray Flycatcher was at CPCP, SM, 26 Sept. (RSTh), while at the other end of the

county, an Eastern Phoebe was reported, 7 Sept., from Ano Nuevo SR (GS fide RSTh). Early reverse-migrant Tropical Kingbirds put in appearances at OPR, MRN, 22 Sept. (DVP, MBr) and Pillar Pt, SM, 24 Sept. (CM). An Eastern Kingbird was at OPR, MRN, 14 Sept. (DvN, TB, oob), and another made for a great yard bird in Berkeley, ALA, on 2 Sept. (RSc).

Two Plumbeous Vireos made coastal appearances: 1 at Stow L., GGP, SF, 9-11 Sept. (BF; oob), and 1 at OPR, MRN, 19-22 Sept. (JHo; oob). Philadelphia Vireos were reported from OPR 14 Sept. (TB, oob) and 26 Sept. (SHa, JM, RF), and from Bodega Bay, SON, 29 Sept. (DSw). Eight Red-eyed Vireos were found in MRN, SF, and SM. Purple Martins were seen at Bodega Bay, SON, 1 Sept. (LL, CL); PRNS, MRN, 10 Sept. (RS); CPCP, SM, 18 Sept. (RSTh); and from the oil spill barge, SF (ASH). OPR, MRN, hosted a Gray-cheeked Thrush (*Catharus minimus*) seen well by 8 birders on 20 Sept. (RS). At Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, a Sage Thrasher was found on 29 Sept. (DW, SC).

Wood Warblers to Finches

Bay-Area birders found 31 species of warblers during the month, most of them vagrants from eastern North America (see chart).

Clay-colored Sparrows were numerous in September: 16 were reported from CC, MRN, SF, and SM, all but 1 from the 21st onward. Six Brewer's Sparrows were reported from MRN, SCL, SF, and SM. On the Farallons, SF, a Black-throated Sparrow arrived on 31 Aug. (PP), and on 10 Sept., a Sage Sparrow was seen at San Bruno Mt, SM (RSTh). A Lark Bunting was found near Moss Beach, SM, 22 Sept. (RSTh). Also early were 2 Lapland Longspurs at the Farallons in the days before 23 Sept. (PP). But the biggest find at the Farallons this month was a Little Bunting (*Emberiza pusilla*), which arrived on 27 Sept. (PP). A small migratory passerine

Wood Warbler Sightings


The following warblers were identified between September 1-30:

Golden-winged Warbler
Tennessee Warbler
Nashville Warbler
Lucy's Warbler
Northern Parula
Chestnut-sided Warbler
Magnolia Warbler
Cape May Warbler
Black-throated Blue Warbler
Blackburnian Warbler
Prairie Warbler
Palm Warbler
Blackpoll Warbler
Black-and-white Warbler
American Redstart
Ovenbird
Northern Waterthrush
Connecticut Warbler
Mourning Warbler
Hooded Warbler
Canada Warbler
Yellow-breasted Chat

For a complete list of Wood Warbler observers, dates and locations, visit our Web site at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

widespread throughout Asia, this marks the first record for this species in northern California.

Only 2 Rose-breasted Grosbeaks were found, 1 female at OPR, MRN, on the 19th (JWi) and 1 male on the 23rd in San Mateo, SM (RSTh). A Blue Grosbeak was along Stevens Creek, SCL, 30 Sept. (MR), while another was seen from the oil spill barge, SF (ASH). The month's only Indigo Bunting was at OPR, MRN, on the 26th (SHa, JH). Single Bobolinks were at Abbott's Lagoon, PRNS, MRN, 22 Sept. (SW), and at the Farallons before 23 Sept. and on 26-27 Sept. (PP). Two were seen near Moss Beach, SM, on the 22nd (RSTh).

Three reports of an imm. male Yellow-headed Blackbird came from different sites at OPR, 9, 26, and 27 Sept. (RS, DvN, KA). Lastly, Orchard Orioles made appearances at Bodega Bay, SON, 4 Sept. ((DN, DHo); on the Farallons 26-27 Sept. (PP); and at OPR, MRN, 22-26 Sept. (DvN; JM, oob). 

Please Vote Yes on Measure N in Berkeley

Berkeley Measure N will help us preserve our Berkeley waterfront. When the state bought land to create the Eastshore State Park it acquired 80 percent of the land Santa Fe Railroad owned on the Berkeley waterfront. The remaining 20 percent of the waterfront, the northern half of the North Basin Strip and the stables area, is now in the hands of Magna Entertainment Corporation. Magna wants to create a massive development on this site. This would destroy the Eastshore State Park and our hopes for habitat restoration. In 1986, prior to the state acquisition, Berkeley residents passed Measure Q to limit the amount of land that could be developed on the waterfront. However, the acquisition of much of that land for a state park made the interpretation of Measure Q a little difficult. Measure N was written to rectify this situation. Measure N creates a mechanism that will allow the city to amend Measure Q and reduce the amount of development allowed on the North Basin strip and stable area. The Berkeley City Council unanimously approved putting Measure N on the ballot. Please lend them and our shoreline your support by voting Yes on Berkeley Measure N.

Vote For the Environment: Vote Yes on State Proposition 50

Proposition 50 provides essential funds for water conservation and recycling and also much-needed money for the acquisition of extremely critical coastal habitats. At least \$200 million will be available for coastal land acquisitions in the Bay Area. Please vote Yes on Prop. 50.

GGAS Wins Grant for Environmental Education Program

GGAS has received a \$15,000 grant from the East Bay Community Foundation to support the Martin Luther King, Jr. Wetlands Education Project. This community-based program in East Oakland involves elementary and high school students and their families. "The grant from East Bay Community Foundation will help us to continue our very successful effort to make natural areas more accessible to inner-city residents and to encourage greater diversity in the environmental field," explained Allan Ridley, GGAS Education Committee Chair. Established in 1928, the East Bay Community Foundation manages more than 400 charitable funds in service to the residents and diverse communities of Alameda and Contra Costa counties.

**WELCOME
NEW
MEMBERS**

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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